

# The Lion

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An Unofficial Newsletter for Members Only of  
Saint Mark's Parish, Denver, Colorado

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## PIONEERS AND PILGRIMS:

### A Travel Report

NOTE: Recently Sister  
Sophia traveled  
northeast from  
Denver to

Hamilton,  
Ontario,  
to settle in  
a newly-  
furbished  
convent –  
Saint Benet  
House – that  
also serves as  
a guesthouse  
for women guests  
at Christminster.

Sister Sophia recorded  
her adventures in her diary,  
but we are privileged here to have the  
adventure as told with comments by Ms Baxter,  
Sister's faithful cat, who accompanied her – not without  
much anxiety – on the long haul.

3 NOVEMBER 2009: Something's up. She's packed  
away everything! I've heard Her talk about "moving" but  
I've never done anything like that. Peace and quiet, and  
everything always the same – that's what I like. We'll just  
have to wait and see.

4 NOV: Yikes! What a day! It started out nice, sunny  
and just right for lounging in that warm spot I like near  
the window. We said our prayers as usual, and I noticed  
he added some special prayers to Saint Raphael "for the  
journey." All I remember about him, apart from being

generally decent toward catkind, is that he had a distinct  
preference for dogs. But I digress.... No sooner were our  
prayers over than I was stuffed into my carrier and put in  
the car. Now ordinarily I'd have settled down after a bit and  
napped, but we were only gone about five minutes when  
there was this great bump and we stopped. Well, I couldn't  
see much, but after a bit of flurry outside we started up  
again.

*(Sister Sophia explains that a large truck without brake  
lights made a sudden stop and she plowed into him. He saw  
there was no damage to his vehicle and took off. Sister on the  
other hand saw her front hood all crunched in. The car was  
fully packed, it still ran, though the hood was crunched  
tightly shut, and the day was getting on.*

*So she continued on and around  
four o'clock stopped for  
the night in Kerney,  
Nebraska.)*

5 NOV: Well,

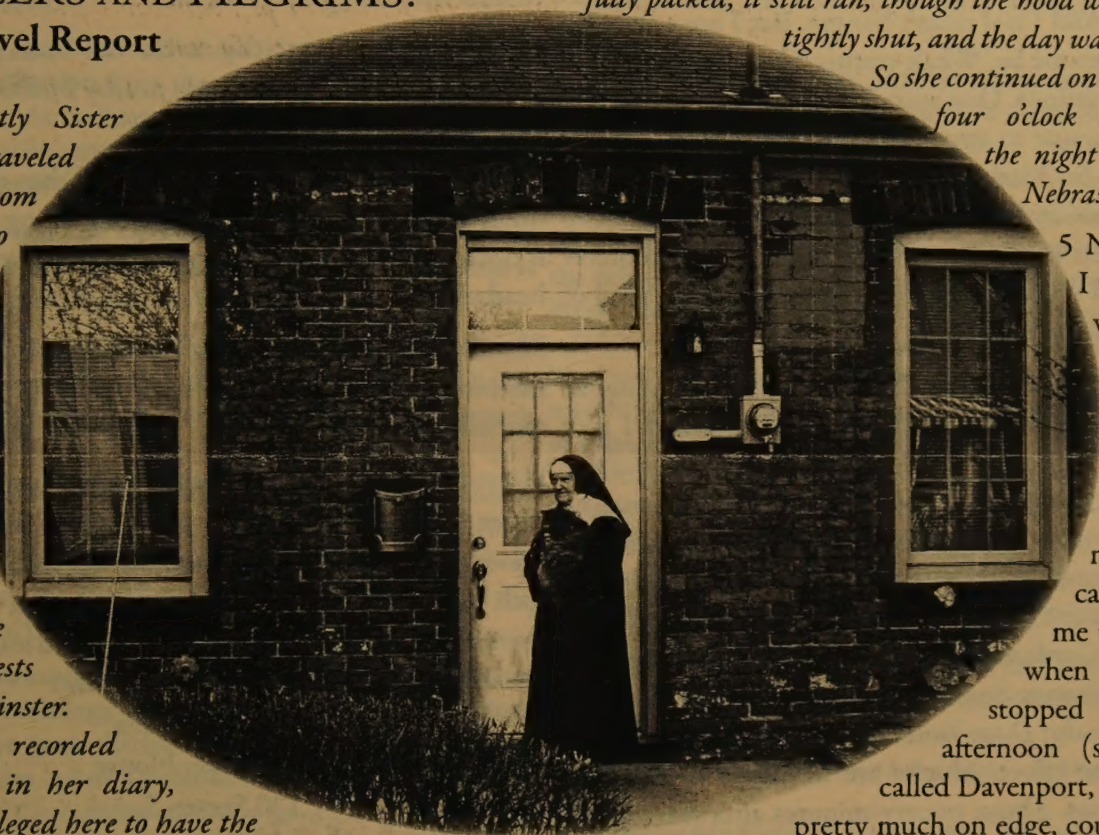
I thought we  
were settled  
and here  
we are  
off again,  
me in my  
box. I am  
not a happy  
camper, let  
me tell you. So

when we finally  
stopped in the  
afternoon (some place  
called Davenport, Iowa) I was

pretty much on edge, couldn't relax,

had no appetite. And there were all these people  
making noise outside. I know She gets upset when I don't  
eat, but what's a cat to do? I should have napped for at least  
eighteen hours today, and got just a fraction of that. O will  
it ever be normal again?

*(Sister Sophia explains that, in looking for gas, she made  
some wrong turns, got lost, but finally headed to Fort Wayne,  
Indiana. Here a major detour took her around farms for  
about an hour and finally back onto route 24. Arriving in  
Fort Wayne during the rush hour and just before dark, and  
very tired, and quite lost, Sister Sophia stopped at the first  
motel she could find. Her plan was to stay in Fort Wayne for  
a few days, meeting her brother and sister, and seeing if the  
car could be fixed.)*





*A call to Rdr. Polycarp Sherwood in Canada resulted in the suggestion to ditch the car. It would cost \$2400.00 to repair it (according to the local mechanic) and the car was not worth that much. Nor would she need a car in Canada anyway. Providentially, Sister's niece wanted to buy the car (as is), since her brother does car repair. So the car was abandoned, Sister made a small profit on it, and lamented it as the best car she'd ever had. But of course, the big issue was that she was now in mid-America, halfway toward her destination in Canada, with all her packed things – to say nothing of a very live kitty – in a pile around her in Fort Wayne!)*

6 NOV: O will this agony ever end! She actually forced me tonight and used a straw to make me drink. So undignified! And I just wasn't hungry. But I ate a little bit just so She'd let me be. While resting I heard this series of phone conversations. One with Polycarp Sherwood saying he'd send someone to rescue us. The other was news that Fr. John from St. Mark's in Denver (I think he's OK – he likes cats) would fly in, hire a car, pack us all in, and drive to Buffalo, NY. So we did this and I have to say it was pretty quiet and dull – almost the way I like it. But I'm tired of being packed away in my box!

AFTERWORD FROM SISTER SOPHIA: Arriving in Buffalo around 6:00pm, Fr. John, Ms Baxter and I met Father James, who had driven down from the monastery in Hamilton to take us across the border and bring us to our new home. Postponing the chore of transferring all of my boxes (including one anxious cat) to Fr. James' vehicle, all (except the cat) went off to a very good dinner at the Italian Gardens. The Italian Gardens, Buffalo, NY has more Christmas decorations in its Lobby than all of Denver, Colorado! Dom James sat on the big Santa Chair to produce the effect. Monks are as happy as children about Christmas. About twenty minutes after leaving the restaurant, I discovered that I had left my pocketbook behind, with my passport and the money from the sale of my car in it. Providentially, the restaurant, when we called, had found it and were sending it by messenger to the hotel. So we breathed a sigh of relief and began transferring many boxes (one with cat inside) to the monastery van. The pocketbook arrived with cash, passport and papers intact.

So Fr. James and I left Fr. John, who would fly back to Denver in the morning, and drove to Canada. The business at the border and immigration was trouble-free, and we arrived at the monastery around one o'clock in the morning. Ms Baxter and I were exhausted. Kitty had been in her carrier for sixteen hours, and desperately needed her box. [Comment from Ms Baxter: You have no idea!] I

went to bed and slept late the next morning, with Fr. James blessing. He was up for Lauds, but I was not!

Because the house was not ready for occupancy, Ms. Baxter and I spent three weeks in the monastery guest room, but we are now established in Saint Benet House. Ms. Baxter seems very pleased, and I have found a place for everything I brought from Colorado. The House is beautiful. With a window in every room and several skylights it is bright and cheerful. Some outside cosmetic work needs to be done, but will await the spring.

I am so grateful to God for blessing me to come here. And I thank you for all the support from Saint Mark's and all my friends who said prayers for me.

So far, except for one day, it has not been very cold and there's been no snow – though nearby Buffalo got a lot last week. I haven't even needed a coat.

I go shopping when the monks go, and they take me to any other activities they participate in. So being without a car is not a problem, and I'm happy not to have that particular headache!

Photos will be forthcoming for those who do not have internet, where I believe some may be posted. The monastery's website is: [www.Christminster.org](http://www.Christminster.org)

Please forgive my delay in keeping you all up to date!

*Sister Sophia*

P.S. from Ms. Baxter: Well, it was worth all the hassle – such peace and quiet here! I get to sleep a good healthy twenty hours a day, all the food I want, no loud noises, and lots of love from Her. It's a cat's paradise!

Sister Sophia

St. Benet House

130 Steven Street

Hamilton, ON L4L 5N9

CANADA

*Sister Sophia relates some additional news from Christminster... She gets about three hours a day between the morning and afternoon prayers for her other tasks. These have been baking for Christmas (not observed until January 6th on the Old Calendar). The weather in Hamilton is very mild and not at all like at Buffalo, NY across Lake Ontario. Dom James is very fond of Ms. Baxter the cat from Colorado and visits her every day with a treat. Food at the grocer is costly in Canada, several times the cost in the USA. Postal Service is oddly confined to the corner of a confectionery shop and home delivery is by a cab driver (nice enough fellow)... the notices of 'non-delivery' arrive days after you pick up your mail and then require an I.D. to verify who you are to some neighbor you greet every day whilst wearing your Monastic habit. Ah, Socialism!*



# What is Orthodox Theology?

WHAT almost always passes for 'Orthodox theology' among English-speaking Orthodox these days is actually just a branch of the larger Orthodox picture. Indeed, it tends sometimes to be rather sectarian.

The Orthodox Church is an ancient castle, as it were, of which only two or three rooms have been much in use since about 1920. These two or three rooms were furnished by the Russian émigrés in Paris between the two World Wars. This furniture is heavily neo-Palamite and anti-Scholastic. It relies heavily on the Cappadocians, Maximus, and Gregory Palamas (who are good folks, or course). Anything that does not fit comfortably into that model is dismissed as "Western" and even non-Orthodox.

Consequently, one will look in vain in that theology for any significant contribution from the Alexandrians, chiefly Cyril, and that major Antiochian, Chrysostom. When these are quoted, it is usually some incidental point on which they can afford to be quoted.

Now I submit that any 'Orthodox' theology that has so little use for the two major figures from Antioch and Alexandria is giving something less than the whole picture.

Likewise, this popular neo-Palamite brand of Orthodoxy, though it quotes Damascene when it is convenient, never really engages Damascene's manifestly 'Scholastic' approach to theology.

Much less does it have any use for the other early Scholastic theologians, such as Theodore the Studite and Euthymus Zygabenus. There is no recognition that Scholasticism was born in the East, not the West, and that only the rise of the Turk kept it from flourishing in the East.

There is also no explicit recognition that the defining pattern of Orthodox Christology was formulated in the West before Chalcedon. Pope Leo's distinctions are already very clear in Augustine decades before Chalcedon. Yet, Orthodox treatises on the history of Christology regularly ignore Augustine.

Augustine tends to be classified as a 'Scholastic,' which he most certainly was not.

But Western and Scholastic are bad words with these folks.

In fact, however, Augustine and the Scholastics represent only other rooms in the larger castle.

For this reason I urge you, as you can, to read in the Orthodox sources that tend to get skipped in what currently passes for 'Orthodoxy.' For my part, I believe the Russian émigré theology from Paris, which seems profoundly reactionary and anti-Western, is an inadequate instrument for the evangelization of this country and the world. I say this while gladly recognizing my own debt to Russian émigré theology."

— **Father Patrick Henry Reardon** (All Saints' Orthodox Church, Chicago), *an excerpt from an e-mail to an inquirer that's been making the rounds in the Orthodox and Catholic blogospheres*

I do, I confess, take exception to the claim [by Fr John McGuckin] that [my] book [*The Beauty of the Infinite*] 'is not Orthodox theology'. Of course it is. Admittedly it does not much resemble the sort of 'neo-Palamite', 'neo-patristic' books which have dominated Eastern theology since the middle of the last century, when the great *ressourcements* movement that has done so much to define modern Orthodoxy was inaugurated. But Orthodox theology has taken many forms over the centuries – mystical, scholastic, mystagogical, idealist, neo-patristic, even 'Sophiological' – all of which have been perfectly legitimate expressions of the Eastern Church's mind. And frankly, I think that the theological idiom to which Orthodox theology has been confined for the last fifty years or so has largely exhausted itself and has become tediously repetitive. It has also, to a very great extent, done much to distort the Orthodox understanding of the traditions of both East and West.

— **David Bentley Hart**, *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 60(1): 95-101 (2007).

Editorial Note: a new low in what claims to be "Orthodox" writing has been achieved in what is commonly called the "pop-byzantine" or "Byz-pop" market. Mathewes-Green's "Facing Eastward" with its nasty bits about Western Rite comes to mind as does Carlton's oddly titled "The Truth" which is a distillation of ten centuries of anti-Catholic polemics. Probably the exhausted end point of Byz-pop has appeared from Regina Press "These Things We Believe." It got this review: "It's a rather odd brew of ill informed apologetics with a little bit of Orthodox language added to taste. Nothing about the Holy Trinity, two natures of Christ, etc. but rather, as pointed out already, a lot of unnecessary and goofy western bashing. The result is pretty disgusting. This is unfortunately what happens when people become Orthodox simply because they want to be right." We might do well to identify "Catholophobia" as a psychological disorder and "Schismophilia" as a heresy. Many of the Byz-pop school treat the 1054 Schism as a Second Pentecost.

## From the Patriarchal Office in Damascus:

The Date of Pascha for the Year of our Salvation 2010

Holy Pascha April 4th

The Holy Forty-Day Fast (Great Lent) begins on Monday, February 15th

The Apostles Fast begins on Monday, May 31st and continues through June 28th.

The Feasts of the Master:

The Glorious Nativity - December 25th

The Circumcision of the Master - January 1st

Theophany - January 6th

Entrance of the Master into the Temple - February 2nd

Palm Sunday - March 28th

The Divine Ascension - Thursday, May 13th

Pentecost Sunday - May 23rd

The Transfiguration - August 6th

Elevation of the Precious Cross - September 14th

The Feasts of the Theotokos:

The Nativity of Our Lady - September 8th

The Entrance of Our Lady into the Temple - November 21st

The Annunciation - March 25th

The Dormition of Our Lady - August 15th



# Orthodox Walsingham

*O Theotokos, thou art the rod whence budded the  
noetic Flower which Hath filled the whole world with  
divine fragrance, even Christ our God, the precious and  
inexhaustible myrrh.*

An Essay contributed by Dom James

ENGLAND'S most famous pilgrim destination has its origin in the twilight of the undivided Church. In 1061 a godly, generous widow, Richeldis de Faverches, had a vision in which the Blessed Virgin asked her to rebuild the modest house in Nazareth where the Annunciation had taken place. It isn't immediately obvious why as England in the 11th century was full of shrines but if the house is seen as a symbol of the Virgin herself, "the living pavilion of the Glory", then Walsingham isn't a conventional holy place marking a site where something heavenly touched earth, but an icon of the union of heaven and earth when God become man. The Annunciation is the beginning and source of all other feasts even the Resurrection, in the analogy of womb and tomb, looks back to the principal feast of the Incarnation. At Walsingham this mystery, hidden from the ages, is made tangible for the children of Mary and Eve, and it is possible to stand on holy ground and to see in the house, the gardens and the sacred spring the types and symbols of the mystery.

Walsingham was destroyed by Henry VIII but its place in the English religious imagination was strong enough to withstand iconoclasm, reformation and the indifference of the established church surviving in folklore and song into the early 20th century. In the 1920s the Anglo-Catholic movement was in its heyday, free from the slums and scandals of the 19th century and not yet enmired in the ecclesiological controversies of the latter half of the 20th. It was colourful, convinced and confident so much so that in 1921 when Fr Alfred Hope Patten was appointed to the Anglican parish it was inevitable that the shrine would be restored. By 1931, despite a bishop whose sensibilities were less catholic than his own, Fr Patten had raised enough money to buy land to rebuild the Holy House. There had been some dispute over the exact location of the original shrine but when the men digging the foundations for Fr Patten discovered not only the remains of a mediaeval building but an ancient well still flowing it was believed to be a sign from the Blessed Virgin herself and the Shrine was rebuilt over the well. In 1931 in a grand, solemn procession which included Orthodox clergy (a rare ecumenical gesture in these days) the replica of the original statue Fr Patten had commissioned was translated to the new Shrine and the next day the Orthodox Liturgy was celebrated in Walsingham for the first time in almost a thousand years.

Seven years later in an event attended by Archbishop Nestor of Kamchatka and Archimandrite Nicholas (Gibbes) who had been tutor to the Russian imperial family, the richly ornamented church enclosing the Shrine was consecrated. The Divine Liturgy was served again this time on the eve of War which was to eventually see many Orthodox prisoners of war held at nearby Hempton. Largely due to the efforts of Archimandrite Nicholas a small Orthodox chapel was built upstairs in the Shrine Church for their use and consecrated at Pentecost 1944 by Archbishop Sava of the Polish Orthodox Church. The chapel, dedicated to the Mother of God of the Life-giving Spring, remains today and although tiny has a very dramatic location with a window overlooking the Shrine's high altar.

Something immediately apparent on visiting Walsingham and comparing it to Lourdes or Fátima or La Salette is that it is the Cinderella of Marian shrines. Walsingham has no drama, no secrets and no debatable doctrine, all it has is a small house built twice with love to show in a homely, tangible way the magnificent news proclaimed by prophets and angels and ordinary men and women throughout the ages: Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son. It is this very simplicity that makes Walsingham feel Orthodox despite the grand focal points being Anglican and Catholic. The Theotokos does not pronounce, judge or command, nor does she appear to have her own agenda but as pious Virgin to pious widow she points to the Incarnation, to Christ, as she does in every icon, in every hymn, of the Orthodox Church and, what she said at the wedding in Cana, she says through Richeldis to us, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."

The shrine gardens, designed by Tessa Hobbs, were laid out around the church in 2005 and are probably the most famous Mary garden in the world. Planted with blue irises, Madonna lilies, lavender and columbine it is a reflection of the belief that the Annunciation happened in a garden but, of course, Mary herself is the garden. She is the "garden enclosed" of the Song of Songs and throughout the bible the image of the garden represents the life we have lost and continually yearn for. Some early theologians, including St Maximos the Confessor, Theophanes the Confessor and Dionysius of Alexandria dated the creation of the world to the 25th of March, the Annunciation, the same day that the new heaven and the new earth would become possible because of the faith of the Theotokos. This is realised particularly in springtime in the Shrine gardens with snowdrops (Candlemass bells), primroses (Our Lady's frills), jonquils (Joseph's staff), campion (Mary's candle), and lily of the valley (Our Lady's tears). One year I found a little borage once known as "the virgin's face" and another a few sweet-scented violets or "lady's modesty".



Of course Walsingham has its share of the tawdry, of plastic rosaries, unlovely reproductions of the famous statue and Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI on coffee mugs. The tea shops are plain, the protestant objectors are missing the point and the High Mass is not for the liturgically erudite or those squeamish about cassock albs and unironed linen. Yet Walsingham is tiny and a few minutes walk a little north-west of the bustle leads to Station Road and the Orthodox Church of St Seraphim of Sarov, small and tranquil, adorned with icons by Father David and Brother Leon, and smelling faintly musty like all country churches through the incense and beeswax. Here there is a shortage of gold and scarlet and ochre and High Church Italianate mediaevalism, the only gold is on the icons from which the saints "look with almond eyes" on their humble surroundings. It used to be a railway waiting room and the old fireplace is still there behind the lectern on which the Akathist to St Seraphim is left open with a kindly note to visitors to say a little of it. This is the church consecrated by Archbishop Nikodem of the Russian Church in Exile in Paris when, in 1967, the Brotherhood of St Seraphim was formed to care for the Shrine chapel, paint icons and minister to the poor and homeless. In all of Walsingham, particularly on any organised pilgrimage day, it is the quietest place to pray or to sit and remember the faith of Richeldis who acted on her vision and of Father Patten who recreated it; of Charlotte Boyd, the laywoman who restored the Catholic shrine; of Archimandrite Nicholas and the prisoners of war and refugees who were the first Orthodox to worship here for nearly a millennium, and of Father David and Mother Serafima who kept the monastic cycle of services until 1993.

And to remember most of all that everything that the enemy accomplished in the garden of Eden; both Eve's foolishness and Adam's weakness, was undone in the spiritual garden of Nazareth; in the words of the Virgin, "be it unto me according to thy word", at which moment Christ became incarnate by the Holy Spirit taking His flesh from her whose flesh was the flesh of Eve and Adam. It needed thousands of years but eventually everything that had become damaged and diseased came together in one place to be healed: the Virgin's womb. Walsingham has existed as a place of external spiritual journeying for a thousand years because of this and to stand in the Holy House and give thanks for it is the point and pinnacle of any pilgrimage.

AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US.

*The Shrine Chapel of Our Lady of Walsingham at St. Mark's, Denver is listed as a separate entity in the Diocese of Wichita. An antimimension is supplied for the Chapel Altar. Confessions are heard there and tapers lit by the faithful. Mass is offered on Wednesdays at Noon.*

## Orthodoxy is Not a Religion of Fear

An Interview with Dr Sr Vassa Larin

*Dr Sr Vassa Larin, a ROCOR nun of the Diocese of Berlin and Germany, is a University Assistant teaching Liturgical Studies (Liturgiewissenschaft) at the University of Vienna in Austria. She is a founding member of the Society of Oriental Liturgy and a candidate for membership of the North American Academy of Liturgy. Unknown documents discovered by Sr Vassa in the State Archive of the Russian Federation and the Archives of the ROCOR Synod of Bishops in 2002 have played a significant role in reconstructing the genuine historical past of the Russian Church Abroad. A result of her research, an article on "oikonomia" is among the most popular articles posted on [www.rocorstudies.org](http://www.rocorstudies.org). We are delighted to introduce Sr Vassa to our readers and to dedicate this interview to the area of her expertise - liturgics.*

-Please tell us about your background and explain why you decided to study theology.

-I was born and raised in the ROCOR, more specifically in the family of a ROCOR priest in Nyack, NY. When I was a novice living in a small monastic community in Munich, it was Archbishop Mark of Berlin and Germany who sent me, along with several other monastics of his diocese, to study theology at the Institute for Orthodox Theology of the University of Munich. His reason for doing this was simple: our diocese needed certified teachers of Orthodox Theology for our parish schools, and we happened to have an Orthodox Institute in Munich. Since higher education in Germany was then free, Vladyka decided to take advantage of this. His decision shocked me at the time, because it never entered my mind that I as an American could study at a German university.

-Tell us about your studies in the Department of Orthodox Theology at Ludwig-Maximilian University in Munich.

-Writing papers and then a thesis in German was a challenge, since I had learned the language mostly autodidactically, and not very well. The program of studies, equivalent to the Master's Degree in the United States, included Ancient Greek, Old Testament and New Testament (Introduction to, History, and Exegesis), History of Philosophy, Church History, Patrology, Canon Law, Homiletics, Pastoral Theology, and Liturgical Studies. I majored in Liturgical Studies and wrote a thesis on the origins of the so-called Royal Office (tsarskoe nachalo) at the beginning of Byzantine matins. Having received a Master's degree, I was urged by my professors to go on to the doctoral program.



I first intended to write a dissertation on Canon Law, but it was at this time that I met the 75-year-old Professor Robert Taft, today the world's leading expert on Byzantine Liturgy. It so happened that Fr Taft read my thesis on Byzantine matins, and wrote me an email about it. In his email he both criticized my work in the most straightforward of terms, and offered to publish it upon its correction. He also invited me to read a lecture at a symposium he was organizing in Bavaria, where I soon met him in person. At the symposium Fr Taft offered to finance and direct my work if I wrote my dissertation on Byzantine Liturgy (and not Canon Law, which he called "the bad side of the good news"), because, as he then put it, "The ROCOR has always been good at celebrating liturgy. Wouldn't it be nice if it also had someone who knew something about it? Go tell your bishop that and let me know what he says."

To make a long story short, with the blessing of Archbishop Mark I wrote my dissertation on "The Entrance Rites of the Byzantine Hierarchical Divine Liturgy" under Taft's direction. Fr Robert not only guided my research and writing of the dissertation; he also taught me the basics of liturgical scholarship and its methodology. "I don't care what you say," he would tell me, "as long as you back it up with evidence." He taught me how to locate and analyze liturgical manuscripts, how to prepare scholarly publications, which periodicals to read on a regular basis, etc. He also took me to conferences and symposia around the world, where he introduced me to top scholars in our field, many of which were once his students. Several months before I completed my dissertation I received a job offer for a post-doctoral position at the University of Vienna's Institute of Liturgical Studies.

On December 18, 2008, I publicly defended my dissertation at the Orthodox Institute in Munich, with both Archbishop Mark and Fr Robert Taft present. According to German academic regulations the "defense" was actually a two-hour oral examination on three different fields related to my work: Liturgical Studies, History of the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, and Byzantine Studies (Byzantinistik). I received a "summa cum laude" for the exam and the dissertation, which is soon to be published in Rome as a volume of the series "Orientalia Christiana Analecta."

-After Archimandrite Robert Taft's presentation at the ROCOR Women's conference last summer, I was told by one of our clergymen that non-Orthodox people should not offer instruction to the Orthodox on matters of faith. Would you please comment on this idea?

-This is a very important issue, and since it disturbs many people I will try to answer in some detail.

Let me first comment on the fear of the non-Orthodox that

appears to have inspired the comment of our clergyman. It seems that some of our faithful experience Orthodoxy first and foremost as fear, while their faith remains largely uninspired, uncurious, and hence uninformed. Such an Orthodoxy often has no idea about its own tradition, about the wealth of history behind the liturgy one attends every Sunday, or even about scripture itself. At the same time, a fearful Orthodox is often willing to spend hours in the Internet, feeding on church politics and dulling the theological senses all the more. To such a culture of ignorance and fear, even the most brilliant non-Orthodox scholars of our Byzantine liturgy are seen as threats, rather than a humbling admonishment to our own negligence of Orthodox tradition.

Let me recall the lecture to which you are referring. At the ROCOR Women's conference Professor Taft gave a talk on the topic "Women at Worship in Byzantium: Glimpses of a Lost World," in which he described the liturgical life of women in the Byzantine Empire based on 5th-14th century historical witnesses. The participants of the Women's Conference learned that there was a women's choir in Hagia Sophia; that Byzantine women once took part in all-night vigils; that there were barriers in the church restricting the mingling of men with women in the church; that several Church Fathers admonished the Byzantines for their misbehavior in church, etc. If the clergyman you mentioned intended to say that this lecture was an example of "non-Orthodox instructing Orthodox on matters of faith," I would have to ask: exactly which "matters of faith" were touched upon in this lecture? Does our clergyman consider the history of women in Byzantium "a matter of faith"? Would an "Orthodox" description of a women's choir in Hagia Sophia differ from a "Roman Catholic" description?

Be that as it may, I would nonetheless agree that history is generally a "matter of faith." Especially because there is no such thing as completely impartial, objective history. However, a knowledge of history requires education. And in the past the Church has hardly been self-sufficient in matters of education, utilizing not only non-Orthodox, but completely secular and even pagan institutions/systems of thought when needed. Beginning at least with the Gospel of John, the Church turns to the terminology developed by pre-Christian philosophers to formulate her own dogmas. An openness toward secular education – with a firm grasp and love for one's own faith – characterized later apologists and teachers of the Church as well. Saints Gregory the Theologian and Basil the Great took pride in having been educated in a pagan school at Athens. The great Chrysostom was taught by Livianus and Theodore of Mopsuestia – the one a pagan, the other a heretic. Although these Holy Fathers lived in times of rampant heresies and dogmatic confusion, they did not



## BENEDICTIONS TO THE FAITHFUL IN CHRIST JESUS,

WHEN Matushka Deborah kindly reminded me that it was time to write our "Christmas Letter," at first I thought that nothing newsworthy had happened in 2009 until I gave it some serious thought.

Then I remembered the St. Matthias Day celebration with Fr. David Donald Lloyd in Madison, Mississippi and the dinner party at Nick's in honor of Father's Ordination as an Orthodox Catholic Priest. At about the same time, with the help of many skilled parishioners including, Major Andrew and Tanya Diederich and Christian and Dianna Cate, our staff at Lancelot Andrewes Press successfully published the *Book of Common Prayer*, 2009. By any standards the BCP is the most complete edition in all the history, since 1549, of the *Book of Common Prayer* and a very handsome prayer book as well. Sales of this version have been brisk and we are most grateful to Ann and Ed Pinfield for providing copies of the BCP for the pews at St. Mark's. We plan for Lancelot Andrewes Press to compliment the BCP with a "newbies" Guide and an Altar Missal in early 2010.

Thanks be to God for the completion of the Basilica at the St. Laurence Retreat campus in the Rocky Mountains near Canon City. The magnificent Basilica is the result of years of planning and design work and much labor on site under often trying conditions. We watched in amazement the magnificent Crucifixion Icon being written by our own Mary Gay Sullivan Coit. This Holy and Venerable Icon hangs in the Basilica above the beautiful marble Altar. This Altar was made locally and stands on five pillars in the antique fashion. The St. Laurence campus is beautifully situated on 560 acres which includes not only the Chapel but a Cemetery, a Mountain Lodge and a newly constructed Dormitory for our guests. We were happy that we were able to offer retreats from August through Mid-November of this year and with local overseers we plan many bookings of Orthodox and Catholic groups in 2010.

The St. Laurence project would not have been possible without the help of many talented volunteers including... Guy Huft and Stephen Greenlee who drove a truck to Iowa to salvage fine old pews from an redundant Church... Guy and his sister Debbie St. Clair obtained quantities of hand picked lumber for the construction of the bunk beds... which were prepared by the young men of St. Mark's (Sean, Daniel, Andrew, Michael, and Austin Ryan and his brothers) who used power tools to cut the various parts for the bunk beds... and finally, Michael Huseby, Andrew Greenlee, Oliver & Claire Brainerd, Richard Rose, and Fr. John assembled the pieces to construct the 28 bunk beds in the dorm rooms. All these folk produced some very practical furniture for the St. Laurence Retreat. Perhaps the future generations who retreat at St. Laurence will offer a wee prayer for those who built all these things.

In September, Bishop Basil visited us at St. Mark's on Labor Day Weekend and preached brilliantly before a capacity congregation on the mystery of Our Lady's Nativity. Matushka Deborah and Sr. Sophia along with the St. Mark's Churchwomen hosted a lovely reception that followed his wonderful homily. In October, we had two inspiring Retreats down at St. Laurence given by Fr. Lester Bundy and Fr. Patrick Reardon. Both events, were well received and we learned plenty. In November, Kh. Susan Wallace led a great Women's Retreat called "The Bride." We were very grateful to Tamara McCrossen and Stephen Greenlee for their assistance in making these Retreats possible.

The daily operation of St. Mark's Parish continues to thrive with a small army of dedicated workers and volunteers. Thanks to the Vestry for conducting the regular business of the Parish and thanks to the Churchwomen for their many "good works." The Altar Guild, the Choir, the Deacons Vladimir and Mark Douglas, the Subdeacons James, John W., John B. and Kentigern, and the Ordained Readers with our experienced and developing Corps d'Acolytes served many Sunday and Holy Day Liturgies. In the background the Altar Guild keep a vast collection of vestments, albs, cotas, small linens, Altar cloths, and Silver & Plate in clean condition. We are

grateful to Sr. Sophia who performed many of these services faithfully during the week-days Masses for over ten years. Her dedication and work ethic helped set the high standard in which our Altar Guild approaches their pious work. We are so happy for Sr. Sophia and her new life at St. Benet House, Christminster monastery in Ontario.

Matushka Deborah has been the Event Planner for St. Mark's for many years. She supervises the Weddings, Funerals, Social Hours and the Bishop's receptions as well as oversees the Luncheons, the SOYO Teen activities, and our Food and Cookie Pantry. Matushka orders and organizes the Bookstore, and Natalie Lickteig helps her with the Sunday sales. Matushka Deborah is the Photographer for the "Lion" newsletter, types up the Sunday bulletins, works in the office, and helps clean up after most Church events. (Is this beginning to sound like an obit to you?)

Matushka Deborah completed our move to the new house in Englewood with all the furniture, Icons, (hundreds) and household goods in 2009. We added a Carriage style garage to our house in hopes to have a place to park our cars and perhaps that will become a reality in 2010. We still have to maintain the old house on St. Paul Street until someone, somehow, can buy it from us. That will be a substantial relief to the household budget and to the stress of yard care and snow removal and so forth on two properties.

My Cousin Lillian died last Summer after two years struggle with lung disease. For years Lillian sang in the choir at St. John's Episcopal Church. She had often stayed with my mother, Ethel Louise, and often they drove together on shopping and social errands around Parsons, Kansas. Cousin Lillian lived happily on a small farm with her 37 cats and 7 dogs. She use to say, "that her pets provided her relief from life's daily stresses!" She is survived by her son, Philip, and her two grandchildren.

Thank God my mother is doing well. I call her weekly and visit her several times during the year. Matushka Deborah maintains a regular e-mail correspondence with her brothers, James, Charles, (General Campbell who will soon retire after a distinguished 40 year military career.) Philip, and her sister, Daria. Much news of her niece and nephews flow through these exchanges. Matushka also visits shut ins and maintains a correspondence with relatives and friends of these folks as well as parishioners. Matushka Deborah is hoping to adopt a more healthy and holy lifestyle in 2010.

One last bit of interest was my latest pilgrimage to Roma, Italia where I performed the minor duties of house sitting a four bedroom flat in Trastevere in late Spring. A high point of the 2009 pilgrimage was a day at the Giotto Exhibit at the Capitoline with Professor Paul Miller and Reader Andrew Greenlee (University of Chicago) where we examined a vast display of the best of the late medieval manuscripts, paintings, carvings, and other artistic triumphs of Italian Catholic civilization. To our surprise, Prof. Miller returned to the manuscript room to urge Andrew and me to hurry on... there is so much to see. We were taking too much time with the manuscripts partly because the old Church 'square note' notation from hundreds of years ago is just what we chant every day at St. Mark's and the old Church Latin is not much a challenge to us Western Rite folk. We were actually singing and not just observing the Sacred texts. So little time, so much Christian civilization.

So, on reflection, as a modest parish priest, I was privileged in one calendar year to see the publication of a beautiful Book of Common Prayer, the opening of a magnificent Basilica in the wilderness, and the completion of two Icons of the highest artistic and devotional quality of our Lord Jesus Christ. (The Resurrection of our Lord over the Baptistry at St. Mark's and the Crucifixion of our Lord over the Altar at St. Laurence.) For all this, and the regular parish routine, we are most thankful for God's many blessings and look forward to the New Year of Grace.

Yours in the Lord's Nativity, Fr. John





Luke Ryan as  
the Boy Bish-  
op on St.  
Nicholas'  
Day  
with his  
Chap-  
lain  
Daniel  
Socrates  
Brainerd.



Thanks to the  
swag makers  
and decora-  
tors this  
Christ  
Mass.



St. Nicholas gave religious instruc-  
tion and handed out gold coin  
chocolates to good boys and  
girls on December 6th.



Children also helped with the deco-  
rating of the Church temple on  
Sunday afternoon.

Jeff Winkelhake placed the swags  
high over the icons. Older boys  
expertly fitted Christmass lights  
over the front porch and balcony.



The  
Murray  
family  
attend  
Christ-  
mas Eve.  
Allison gath-  
ered greens for  
the Church.





cultivate an Orthodoxy of fear. It was rather an Orthodoxy of responsibility and dogmatic awareness, inspired and fortified by a thirst for education.

Many centuries later the Russian Church had no formal system of theological education until it was imported from the Roman-Catholic West via Kiev around the middle of the 17th c. It is an historical fact that St Peter Moghila organized his theological schools according to Jesuit models, and it was this educational system that was instituted in Muscovy. The reason for importing our educational system from the West was very simple: this was not only the best educational system at the time, it was the only one at the time. The alternative to learning from the West was remaining uneducated. Should the Russian Church have rejected Western education and preferred to remain uneducated? Let me put it differently: If given a choice, would any of us prefer for our children to remain uneducated rather than giving them an education? So the Russian Church chose to learn from the West, demonstrating common sense and, I might add, humility.

Today we have a similar situation. Many Orthodox families in the West send their children to Catholic schools and universities, or to non-Orthodox public or private schools. In these institutions our youngsters are taught, among other things, history, literature, philosophy – subjects that could involve “matters of faith.” In school the children have contact with non-Orthodox in religious matters: for example, they recite the Pledge of Allegiance, pronouncing the name of God together with non-Orthodox, Muslims, Jews, and perhaps atheists. Many of us allow our children to watch movies such as “The Passion” by Mel Gibson, a non-Orthodox. Indeed, we allow ourselves and our children to have contact with non-Orthodox in “matters of faith” on various levels and on a daily basis.

Is it the will of God that we find ourselves in this situation, surrounded by this non-Orthodox world? The Church has never taught us otherwise. The Founder of the Church left His disciples in this world, having said, “Take heart, for I have defeated the world.” And so the Church sings, “Take heart, ye people of God, for He has defeated the enemies...” (Derzayte vydyie Bozhii, ibo toy pobedi vragi...).” This is not a religion of fear.

Of course the faith of the Church is exclusive, and we owe our loyalty to her alone: we embrace one faith, and not many different faiths at once. But this does not mean that we have no contact with people of other faiths. Marriage is also exclusive, but a married couple does not lock itself in a closet, excluding all contact with other men and women. That would be absurd and unhealthy, and the same would be true of the Church if it ghettoized its everyday life. §

# THE INCARNATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

BEING THE TREATISE OF ST. ATHANASIUS

*De Incarnatione Verbi Dei*

Newly Translated into English by A Religious of C.S.M.V. S.Th.

<http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/athanasius/incarnation/incarnation.c.htm>

With an Introduction by Clive Staples Lewis

## INTRODUCTION

THERE is a strange idea abroad that in every subject the ancient books should be read only by the professionals, and that the amateur should content himself with the modern books. Thus I have found as a tutor in English Literature that if the average student wants to find out something about Platonism, the very last thing he thinks of doing is to take a translation of Plato off the library shelf and read the *Symposium*. He would rather read some dreary modern book ten times as long, all about “isms” and influences and only once in twelve pages telling him what Plato actually said. The error is rather an amiable one, for it springs from humility. The student is half afraid to meet one of the great philosophers face to face. He feels himself inadequate and thinks he will not understand him. But if he only knew, the great man, just because of his greatness, is much more intelligible than his modern commentator. The simplest student will be able to understand, if not all, yet a very great deal of what Plato said; but hardly anyone can understand some modern books on Platonism. It has always therefore been one of my main endeavours as a teacher to persuade the young that first-hand knowledge is not only more worth acquiring than second-hand knowledge, but is usually much easier and more delightful to acquire.

This mistaken preference for the modern books and this shyness of the old ones is nowhere more rampant than in theology. Wherever you find a little study circle of Christian laity you can be almost certain that they are studying not St. Luke or St. Paul- or St. Augustine or Thomas Aquinas or Hooker or Butler, but M. Berdyaev or M. Maritain or M. Niebuhr or Miss Sayers or even myself.

Now this seems to me topsy-turvy. Naturally, since I myself am a writer, I do not wish the ordinary reader to read no modern books. But if he must read only the new or only the old, I would advise him to read the old. And I would give him this advice precisely because he is an amateur and therefore much less protected than the expert against the dangers of an exclusive contemporary diet. A new book is still on its



trial and the amateur is not in a position to judge it. It has to be tested against the great body of Christian thought down the ages, and all its hidden implications (often unsuspected by the author himself) have to be brought to light. Often it cannot be fully understood without the knowledge of a good many other modern books. If you join at eleven o'clock a conversation which began at eight you will often not see the real bearing of what is said. Remarks which seem to you very ordinary will produce laughter or irritation and you will not see why-the reason, of course, being that the earlier stages of the conversation have given them a special point. In the same way sentences in a modern book which look quite ordinary may be directed "at" some other book; in this way you may be led to accept what you would have indignantly rejected if you knew its real significance. The only safety is to have a standard of plain, central Christianity ("mere Christianity" as Baxter called it) which puts the controversies of the moment in their proper perspective. Such a standard can be acquired only from the old books. It is a good rule, after reading a new book, never to allow yourself another new one till you have read an old one in between. If that is too much for you, you should at least read one old one to every three new ones.

Every age has its own outlook. It is specially good at seeing certain truths and specially liable to make certain mistakes. We all, therefore, need the books that will correct the characteristic mistakes of our own period. And that means the old books. All contemporary writers share to some extent the contemporary outlook-even those, like myself, who seem most opposed to it. Nothing strikes me more when I read the controversies of past ages than the fact that both sides were usually assuming without question a good deal which we should now absolutely deny. They thought that they were as completely opposed as two sides could be, but in fact they were all the time secretly united-united with each other and against earlier and later ages-by a great mass of common assumptions. We may be sure that the characteristic blindness of the twentieth century-the blindness about which posterity will ask, "But how could they have thought that?"-lies where we have never suspected it, and concerns something about which there is untroubled agreement between Hitler and President Roosevelt or between Mr. H. G. Wells and Karl Barth. None of us can fully escape this blindness, but we shall certainly increase it, and weaken our guard against it, if we read only modern books. Where they are true they will give us truths which we half knew already. Where they are false they will aggravate the error with which we are already dangerously ill. The only palliative is to keep the clean sea breeze of the centuries blowing through our minds, and this can be done only by reading old books. Not, of course, that there is any magic about the past. People were no cleverer then

than they are now; they made as many mistakes as we. But not the same mistakes. They will not flatter us in the errors we are already committing; and their own errors, being now open and palpable, will not endanger us. Two heads are better than one, not because either is infallible, but because they are unlikely to go wrong in the same direction. To be sure, the books of the future would be just as good a corrective as the books of the past, but unfortunately we cannot get at them.

I myself was first led into reading the Christian classics, almost accidentally, as a result of my English studies. Some, such as Hooker, Herbert, Traherne, Taylor and Bunyan, I read because they are themselves great English writers; others, such as Boethius, St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas and Dante, because they were "influences." George Macdonald I had found for myself at the age of sixteen and never wavered in my allegiance, though I tried for a long time to ignore his Christianity. They are, you will note, a mixed bag, representative of many Churches, climates and ages. And that brings me to yet another reason for reading them. The divisions of Christendom are undeniable and are by some of these writers most fiercely expressed. But if any man is tempted to think-as one might be tempted who read only contemporaries-that "Christianity" is a word of so many meanings that it means nothing at all, he can learn beyond all doubt, by stepping out of his own century, that this is not so. Measured against the ages "mere Christianity" turns out to be no insipid interdenominational transparency, but something positive, self-consistent, and inexhaustible. I know it, indeed, to my cost. In the days when I still hated Christianity, I learned to recognise, like some all too familiar smell, that almost unvarying something which met me, now in Puritan Bunyan, now in Anglican Hooker, now in Thomist Dante. It was there (honeyed and floral) in Francois de Sales; it was there (grave and homely) in Spenser and Walton; it was there (grim but manful) in Pascal and Johnson; there again, with a mild, frightening, Paradisial flavour, in Vaughan and Boehme and Traherne. In the urban sobriety of the eighteenth century one was not safe-Law and Butler were two lions in the path. The supposed "Paganism" of the Elizabethans could not keep it out; it lay in wait where a man might have supposed himself safest, in the very centre of *The Faerie Queene* and the *Arcadia*. It was, of course, varied; and yet-after all-so unmistakably the same; recognisable, not to be evaded, the odour which is death to us until we allow it to become life

... an air that kills

From yon far country blows.

We are all rightly distressed, and ashamed also, at the divisions of Christendom. But those who have always lived within the Christian fold may be too easily dispirited by them. They are bad, but such people do not know what it looks like



from without. Seen from there, what is left intact despite all the divisions, still appears (as it truly is) an immensely formidable unity. I know, for I saw it; and well our enemies know it. That unity any of us can find by going out of his own age. It is not enough, but it is more than you had thought till then. Once you are well soaked in it, if you then venture to speak, you will have an amusing experience. You will be thought a Papist when you are actually reproducing Bunyan, a Pantheist when you are quoting Aquinas, and so forth. For you have now got on to the great level viaduct which crosses the ages and which looks so high from the valleys, so low from the mountains, so narrow compared with the swamps, and so broad compared with the sheep-tracks.

The present book is something of an experiment. The translation is intended for the world at large, not only for theological students. If it succeeds, other translations of other great Christian books will presumably follow. In one sense, of course, it is not the first in the field. Translations of the *Theologia Germanica*, the *Imitation*, the *Scale of Perfection*, and the *Revelations of Lady Julian of Norwich*, are already on the market, and are very valuable, though some of them are not very scholarly. But it will be noticed that these are all books of devotion rather than of doctrine. Now the layman or amateur needs to be instructed as well as to be exhorted. In this age his need for knowledge is particularly pressing. Nor would I admit any sharp division between the two kinds of book. For my own part I tend to find the doctrinal books often more helpful in devotion than the devotional books, and I rather suspect that the same experience may await many others. I believe that many who find that "nothing happens" when they sit down, or kneel down, to a book of devotion, would find that the heart sings unbidden while they are working their way through a tough bit of theology with a pipe in their teeth and -a pencil in their hand.

This is a good translation of a very great book. St. Athanasius has suffered in popular estimation from a certain sentence in the "Athanasian Creed." I will not labour the point that that work is not exactly a creed and was not by St. Athanasius, for I think it is a very fine piece of writing. The words "Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly" are the offence. They are commonly misunderstood. The operative word is keep; not acquire, or even believe, but keep. The author, in fact, is not talking about unbelievers, but about deserters, not about those who have never heard of Christ, nor even those who have misunderstood and refused to accept Him, but of those who having really understood and really believed, then allow themselves, under the sway of sloth or of fashion or any other invited confusion to be drawn away into sub-Christian modes of thought. They are a warning

against the curious modern assumption that all changes of belief, however brought about, are necessarily exempt from blame. But this is not my immediate concern. I mention "the creed (commonly called) of St. Athanasius" only to get out of the reader's way what may have been a bogey and to put the true Athanasius in its place. His epitaph is *Athanasius contra mundum*, "Athanasius against the world." We are proud that our own country has more than once stood against the world. Athanasius did the same. He stood for the Trinitarian doctrine, "whole and undefiled," when it looked as if all the civilised world was slipping back from Christianity into the religion of Arius - into one of those "sensible" synthetic religions which are so strongly recommended to-day and which, then as now, included among their devotees many highly cultivated clergymen. It is his glory that he did not move with the times; it is his reward that he now remains when those times, as all times do, have moved away.

When I first opened his *De Incarnatione* I soon discovered by a very simple test that I was reading a masterpiece. I knew very little Christian Greek except that of the New Testament and I had expected difficulties. To my astonishment I found it almost as easy as Xenophon; and only a master mind could, in the fourth century, have written so deeply on such a subject with such classical simplicity. Every page I read confirmed this impression. His approach to the Miracles is badly needed to-day, for it is the final answer to those who object to them as "arbitrary and meaningless violations of the laws of Nature." They are here shown to be rather the re-telling in capital letters of the same message which Nature writes in her crabbed cursive hand; the very operations one would expect of Him who was so full of life that when He wished to die He had to "borrow death from others." The whole book, indeed, is a picture of the Tree of Life a sappy and golden book, full of buoyancy and confidence. We cannot, I admit, appropriate all its confidence to-day. We cannot point to the high virtue of Christian living and the gay, almost mocking courage of Christian martyrdom, as a proof of our doctrines with quite that assurance which Athanasius takes as a matter of course. But whoever may be to blame for that it is not Athanasius.

The translator knows so much more Christian Greek than I that it would be out of place for me to praise her version. But it seems to me to be in the right tradition of English translation. I do not think the reader will find here any of that sawdusty quality which is so common in modern renderings from the ancient languages. That is as much as the English reader will notice; those who compare the version with the original will be able to estimate how much wit and talent is presupposed in such a choice, for example, as "these wiseacres" on the very first page.

C. S. LEWIS.



**"WHEN CHRIST CAME INTO THE WORLD, HE  
SAID, 'SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS  
YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT  
A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME'"**

Cardinal Ratzinger's writings on the Sacred Heart are warm and luminous. This review is from *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly Edition in English, 25 May 2005. The quotations are from works of now Pope Benedict XVI.

**T**HEOLOGIANs WHO DO NOT PERSEVERE in a humble prayer of amazement and adoration fall inevitably into one of two syndromes. Either they generate heat without shedding any light, or they shine a cold light, one that fails to warm the heart. The true theologian at once warms the heart and illumines the mind.

Recall the words of Jesus concerning John the Baptist: "He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light" (Jn 5:35). In our new Holy Father, God has given the Church "a burning and shining lamp" (Jn 5:35). Those already familiar with his writings and liturgical preaching know what I mean.

Theology itself is a difficult word. Theology of the Sacred Heart thrusts us into deep waters. The Song of Songs assures us that "many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it" (8:7).

Theology is more than a mere flood of words. All words oblige us, in some way, to wrestle with meaning. Words are the vehicle of meaning. Words wait to be unlocked. The words we use in talking about God, or in talking to God, can be unlocked only in prayer.

Before we can reflect on a theology of the Sacred Heart, we have to ask ourselves this question: "What do we mean by theology?"

The Greek etymology of the word discloses both God (theós) and word (lógos). Lógos, in turn, has a huge richness: it can mean word, but it also signifies meaning, message, poem and even hymn.

When we speak of theology we mean not one thing but at least three: word from God; word to God; and word about God. All theology, and therefore a theology of the Sacred Heart, is more adequately understood in terms of: God's self-revealing word addressed to us; the doxological word of Christ and of the Church addressed to God; and the healing word of the Church addressed to the world.

**SACRED HEART: GOD'S WORD ADDRESSED TO US**

Theology is, first of all, God's word addressed to us. Apply this immediately to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The pierced Heart of the Crucified is God speaking a word to us, a word carved out in the flesh of Jesus' side by the soldier's lance. It is the love of God laid bare for all to see: "God stepping out of his hiddenness".

When we speak of a theology of the Sacred Heart, we mean this first of all: not our discourse about love, but the love of God revealed first to us, the poem of love that issues forth from the Heart of God. This is exactly what St John, whom the Eastern tradition calls, "The Theologian", says in his First Letter: "In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins" (1 Jn 4:10).

The difficulty here is that, in order to receive this word inscribed in the flesh of the Word (cf. Jn 1:14), we have first to stop in front of it, to linger there and to look long at the wound made by love.

"They shall look on him whom they have pierced" (Jn 19:37). To contemplate is to look, not with a passing glance, but with the gaze of one utterly

conquered by love. Jeremiah says, "You have seduced me, O Lord, and I was seduced; you are stronger than I, and you have prevailed" (20:7).

The call to be an adorer and an apostle of the Sacred Heart is addressed to every Christian. The apostle is, in essence, the bearer of a word, one sent forth and entrusted with a message. The message that the apostle carries into the world is the one he has learned by looking long with the eyes of adoration at the pierced Heart of the Crucified.

The word of Crucified Love is hard to pronounce — not with our lips but with our lives. Adoration is the school wherein one learns how to say the Sacred Heart. It is in adoration that the apostle receives the word of the pierced Heart that, in turn, becomes his life's message.

Adoration and apostleship together model a spirituality accessible to all Christians: the word received in adoration is communicated in the dynamism of one sent forth with something to say.

**SACRED HEART: OUR WORD ADDRESSED TO GOD**

Theology is, in the second place, our word addressed to God. Applying this also to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we see that all we could possibly want to say to God has already been uttered and is being said eternally through the "mouth" of Christ's glorious pierced Heart in heaven. It is through the Sacred Heart that the Blood of Christ speaks "more graciously than the blood of Abel" (Heb 12:24).

The Letter to the Hebrews puts it this way: "Christ is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he lives for ever to make intercession for them" (7:25). Christ exercises his priesthood of intercession in "the inner sanctuary behind the veil" (Heb 6:19) by presenting to the Father the glorious wounds in his hands, his feet and his side. The wound in the side of Christ, "great high priest over the house of God" (Heb 10:21), speaks to the Father on our behalf. It is our word addressed to God.

At the core of devotion to the Sacred Heart is a passing-over into the prayer of Christ to the Father, a long apprenticeship to silence by which we begin to let the Heart of Christ speak in us and for us to the Father.

The mystics of the Sacred Heart, in particular St Gertrude and St Mechthilde, speak of offering the Sacred Heart of Jesus to the Father. This means allowing the Sacred Heart to speak for us, to pray in us, to pray through us, taking comfort in what Scripture says, "that we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15).

This suggests a simple way of praying, one accessible to all: "Lord Jesus, I come to be silent in your presence, trusting that your Heart will speak for me, knowing that all I could ever want to say, that all I would ever need to say, is spoken eternally to the Father by your Sacred Heart".

In this way, everything that prayer can or should express — adoration, praise, thanksgiving, supplication and reparation — finds its most perfect expression.



Devotion to the Sacred Heart, thus understood, is a manifestation in the Church of the Holy Spirit, "helping us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought" (Rom 8:26).<sup>5</sup> The Sacred Heart is, in the life of the Church, the organ by which "the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom 8:27).

Cardinal Ratzinger wrote: "We see who Jesus is if we see him at prayer. The Christian confession of faith comes from participating in the prayer of Jesus, from being drawn into his prayer and being privileged to behold it; it interprets the experience of Jesus' prayer, and its interpretation of Jesus is correct because it springs from a sharing in what is most personal and intimate to him".

This is the prayer of the Sacred Heart, the prayer that filled the days and nights of Jesus' earthly life, the prayer that suffused his sufferings and ascended from the Cross at the hour of his death, the prayer that with him descended into the depths of the earth, the prayer that continues uninterrupted in the glory of his risen and ascended life, the prayer that is ceaseless in the Sacrament of the Altar.

Cardinal Ratzinger wrote that "by entering into Jesus' solitude", and "only by participating in what is most personal to him, his communication with the Father, can one see what this most personal reality is; only thus can one penetrate to his identity".

The Sacred Heart represents and invites us into what is most personal to Jesus: his communication with the Father.

In words that today sound almost prophetic, Cardinal Ratzinger concluded that "the person who has beheld Jesus' intimacy with his Father and has come to understand him from within is called to be a 'rock' of the Church. The Church arises out of participation in the prayer of Jesus (cf. Lk 9:18-20; Mt 16:13-20)".

#### PRAYER OF THE SACRED HEART IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Letter to the Hebrews tells us exactly what was the prayer of the Heart of Christ at the moment he took flesh in the Virgin's womb: "When Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure'. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God', as it is written of me in the scroll of the book" (Heb 10:5-7). This is the first prayer of the Heart of Jesus, "substantially united to the Word of God".

The prayer of the Heart of Christ revealed in the Letter to the Hebrews resonates throughout the Fourth Gospel. Cardinal Ratzinger wrote: "We could say that the Fourth Gospel draws us into that intimacy which Jesus reserved for those who were his friends" (ibid., 22). The Gospel of the Beloved Disciple belongs, in a special sense, to the friends of the Heart of Jesus.

The liturgy gives us the Gospel of St John on every Sunday and weekday during Paschaltide. Holy Thursday's Gospel of Jesus washing his disciples' feet at the Last Supper (cf. Jn 13:1-5) becomes Good Friday's Gospel of the Heart from which flowed blood and water: "They shall look on him where they have pierced" (cf. Jn 19:34-37).

By continuing to read the Fourth Gospel on Easter Sunday (Jn 20:1-9) and for the 50 days following, the liturgy guides us into the prayer of the Heart of Christ.

The Second Sunday of Easter, that of Divine Mercy, invites us

in a particular way to the contemplation of the Sacred Heart. In the Gospel (Jn 20:19-31), the Risen Christ stands before Thomas, inviting him to touch his wounded side. Cardinal Ratzinger wrote: "All of us are Thomas, unbelieving; but like him, all of us can touch the exposed Heart of Jesus and... behold the Logos himself. So, with our hands and eyes fixed upon this Heart, we can attain to the confession of faith: 'My Lord and my God!'".

The liturgical lectionary's repartition of the Fourth Gospel is integral to the mystical pedagogy of the Church. When the liturgical Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus arrives on the Friday following the Second Sunday after Pentecost, it finds us already prepared, ready and full of desire to pass fully into the prayer of the Sacred Heart.

For Cardinal Ratzinger, "the entire Gospel testimony is unanimous that Jesus' words and deeds flowed from his most intimate communion with the Father; that he continually went 'into the hills' to pray in solitude after the burden of the day (cf., Mk 1:35; 6:46; 14:35, 39)". He notes that "Luke, of all the Evangelists, lays stress on this feature. He shows that the essential events of Jesus' activity proceeded from the core of his personality and that this core was his dialogue with the Father".

#### PRAYER OF THE SACRED HEART IN THE PSALMS

The psalms also express and communicate the prayer of the Heart of Christ. The Psalter is for the Church a "sacrament" of the prayer of the Heart of Christ to the Father, revealing that prayer and making it present in her.

Jesus intoned two psalms from the Cross, leaving it to his Church to continue them: Psalm 21 in Matthew 21:46, and Psalm 30 in Luke 23:46.

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" (Mt 27:46). The Church, imaged in the Mother of Jesus, the beloved disciple and the other holy women at the foot of the Cross (cf. Jn 19:25), prays the psalm through to the end to discover in its triumphant final verses (cf. Ps 21:22-31) the promise of a banquet for the afflicted and the hope of the resurrection: "The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; and those who seek him shall praise the Lord! May your hearts live for ever" (Ps 21:26).

Psalm 30 gives the verse, "Into your hands I commit my spirit" (Ps 30:5). Praying it from the Cross at the hour of his death, Jesus adds a single word, a word that rises out of the depths of his Heart and utterly transforms the psalmist's prayer into one by which the Son entrusts everything to the Father. "Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!'. And having said this he breathed his last" (Lk 23:46).

"Jesus died praying.... Although the Evangelists' accounts of the last words of Jesus differ in details, they agree on the fundamental fact that Jesus died praying. He fashioned his death into an act of prayer, an act of worship.... The last words of Jesus were an expression of his devotion to the Father.... His cry was not uttered to anyone, anywhere, but to Him, since it was of his innermost essence to be in a dialogue relationship with the Father".

#### PRAYER OF THE SACRED HEART IN THE LITURGY

The prayer of the Heart of Christ at the hour of his sacrifice passes entirely into the heart of the Church, where it is prolonged and



actualized "from the rising of the sun to its setting" (Mal 1:11) in the Liturgy of the Hours and in the mystery of the Eucharist.

Cardinal Ratzinger asks if, after the once-for-all Pasch of Jesus, anything more is needed. "After the tearing of the Temple curtain and the opening up of the heart of God in the pierced heart of the Crucified, do we still need sacred space, sacred time, mediating symbols? Yes, we do need them, precisely so that, through the 'image', through the sign, we learn to see the openness of heaven. We need them to give us the capacity to know the mystery of God in the pierced heart of the Crucified".

It is through the liturgy, first and above all, that we pass over into the prayer of the Sacred Heart, the word to the Father forever inscribed in his pierced side.

#### SACRED HEART: THE CHURCH'S WORD TO THE WORLD

Theology is, finally, a word about God addressed to the world, a word about God addressed to anyone who will listen. The Sacred Heart, pierced in death, becomes a word of life for the world.

"Death, which by its very nature is the end, the destruction of every communication, is changed by Jesus into an act of self-communication; and this is man's redemption, for it signifies the triumph of love over death. We can put the same thing another way: death, which puts an end to words and to meaning, itself becomes a word, becomes the place where meaning communicates itself".

This means that after the mouth of Jesus fell silent in death, there remained the open side and the pierced Heart that speaks of nothing but love, the ultimate and everlasting word about God.

In the final analysis, one "impelled by the charity of Christ" (cf. II Cor 5:14) will have but one message, that of the pierced Heart revealing the love of the Father and "drawing all to himself" (cf. Jn 12:32).

One who has contemplated the message carved in the flesh of Jesus' side by the soldier's lance and learned to read it in adoration has but one language in which to speak to the world: the language of the heart.

It is learned not in conferences or classrooms or books, but in silence and in the contemplation of the Pierced One. It is learned especially in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

The language of the heart encompasses a thousand local dialects, a million accents. Devotion to the Sacred Heart impels the Christian to an inventive charity, a charity ready to explore every dark and treacherous place in search of the lost sheep.

"Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame" (Lk 14:21). "The great gesture of embrace emanating from the Crucified has not yet reached its goal; it has only just begun."

#### WORD FROM GOD, WORD TO GOD, WORD FOR THE WORLD

Word of God addressed to us, word addressed to God, word of the Church addressed to the world: herein lies one approach to a theology of the Sacred Heart. The liturgy remains its primary articulation. Together with the Liturgy of the Hours for the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart, the Biblical texts provided for the Mass — *Introit, Epistle, Gradual, Gospel, Offertory, Communion* — become a fundamental resource, an inexhaustible treasure waiting to be mined for every one called to hear, to pray and to offer the

healing word that is the pierced Heart.

The Sacred Heart is the Heart of God laid bare for man: word from God. It is a human Heart lifted high on the Cross: word to God. It is the Heart of the Church open to all who seek, to all who thirst, to every lost sheep waiting to be found and carried home: word for the world.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the full and irrevocable message of the Father to us. It is everything we ever could or should need to say to the Father. It is all we have to say to one another and to the world.

Pope Benedict XVI, writing in 1981 as Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, challenges us to nothing less: "In the Heart of Jesus, the center of Christianity is set before us. It expresses everything, all that is genuinely new and revolutionary in the New Covenant. This Heart calls to our heart. It invites us to step forth out of the futile attempt of self-preservation and, by joining in the task of love, by handing ourselves over to him and with him, to discover the fullness of love which alone is eternity and which alone sustains the world". §

Ed. Note: The Propers for the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus are found on page 583 of *The Book of Common Prayer*, 2009.

Please consult your 2010 Calendar and the weekly bulletins for Feast Day Masses in January. Fr. John plans to be in New York City on 29, 30 January and no Saturday Class or Mass that day. Otherwise our regular schedule will, D.V., be followed.

## THE LION

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